THE

"HINDU MESSAGE"

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

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The **Hindu Message** stands for

(1) The Maintenance of British supremacy with self-government for India,

(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,

(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,

(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual basis and

(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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A Vision Of India.

THE MAHENDRA MOUNTAIN.

By K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, B.A., B.L.

O holy hill that through the live-long day
Th' eternal music of the ocean hears!
The ruthless hands of onward-rolling years
Have not from thee thy glories shorn away.
Upon thy top to tread the pathless way
To where fair Sita captive and in tears
Sat speechless 'mid surrounding griefs and fears
Hanuman stood alert and glad and gay.
He stood an instant but his mind had flown
On powerful angel-wings of faith and prayer
In joy to Sita's gracious lotus feet.
And as a singer's magnet-soul his tone
Attracts to thrill and rule th' expectant air
Her Sakthi drew his frame to her bright seat.

The Hindu Message

THURSDAY EVENING 24, JAN. 1918.

The Division of Varnas or Castes in India.

The blessed Bhagavan has declared in the Gita (IV. 13) as follows:—

चतुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणाकर्मविभागशः ।

"The four Varnas were created by me according to the division of Guna and Karma."

In Chap. XIV. 3, 4, and 5, he also says:—

मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥
सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥
सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसंभवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

"The undifferentiated Prakriti (nature) is the womb for me, and in it I deposit my seed. From it, O descendant of Bharata, is the birth of all objects. Of the bodies O son of Kunti, which are born in all (the different kinds of) wombs, Prakriti is the great (i.e., undifferentiated) womb, and I am the father, the giver of the seed. Sattva, rajas, tamas, are the gunas (substances) which arise (by differentiation) from the Prakriti, and, O you of mighty arms, they bind down the indestructible soul in the body."

The Karmas (or svadharmas) corresponding to or inseparably associated with these gunas are stated in Gita, Chap. XVIII 42–44:—

शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।
ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥
शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।
दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षत्रकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥
कृषिगौरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।
परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥

"Tranqullity, restraint of the senses, penance, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, knowledge, realisation, and belief (in the continued existence of the jiva after death), form the duties springing from the inborn tendencies of the Brahmins. Valour, glory, courage, resourcefulness (in emergencies), never running away from (the field of) battle, making gifts, the masterful temper which can command obedience (to Dharma), form the duties of Kshatriyas which spring from their inborn tendencies. And rendering service (in obedience to command) is the duty of Sudras which springs from their inborn tendencies."

We thus see that *four Varnas* arise from the *three Gunas* as follows:—(1) one in which Sattva preponderates over Rajas which is next in amount, with tamas in insignificance; (2) that in which rajas preponderates over Sattva, also with tamas in insignificance; (3) that in which rajas preponderates over tamas, with sattva in subordination to both; (4) that in which tamas preponderates over rajas, also with sattva in subordination to both. Lastly, we must understand that this division of Varnas exists in all objects in the universe. For, the Bhagavan speaks of "the bodies which are born in all (the different kinds of) wombs" (XIV. 4, quoted above). Sri Sankaracharya explains this as follows:— 'देवपितृमनुष्य-

पशुमृगादि सर्वयोनिषु देहसंस्थानलक्षणाः मूर्छिताङ्गावयवाः मूर्तयः संभवन्ति याः' "Those bodies composed of various limbs and organs, which are born in all kinds of wombs such as devas, pitris, human beings, cows, beasts, &c." Sri Ramanujacharya also gives an exactly similar explanation of this same context :—

'सर्वासु देवगन्धर्वयक्षराक्षसमनुष्यपशुमृगपक्षिसरीसृपादिषु योनिषु तत्तन्मूर्तयो याः संभवन्ति जायन्ते–'

"Those bodies which are born in all (kinds of) wombs such as devas, gandharvas, yaksha, rakshasa, man, cow, beast, birds, snakes, &c."

From the above quotations we learn (1) that the four-fold division of Varnas exists throughout the universe; (2) that on earth they exist not only among men, but also among cows, beasts, birds, snakes, and also trees, &c; (3) that the four divisions correspond to the character of the corporeal substance (*guna*) which preponderates among the three gunas or substances existing in combination in universal matter; (4) that the *guna* exists as an inner physical tendency (or Vasana or Samskara) which will surely assert itself when the suitable opportunity offers and when it becomes ripe for manifestation.

The questions for consideration are, *firstly*, why the four divisions are found as separate communities only in India and among Hindus, while Sri Krishna says that at the time of creation, he divided *men in general* into these four divisions according to the corresponding material substance or endowment (guna) and activities (karma)? *secondly*, How is it that even in India karmas do not correspond to Varnas and Gunas?

Let us take up the second question first. The Sastra prescribes the duties of the various Varnas from *two* points of view,—*first*, from the point of view of the social and economic progress of the people,—what Manu speaks of as 'सर्वस्यास्य सर्गस्य गुप्त्यर्थं' "to protect (the interests of) the entire created universe" (I. 87). From this point of view, Manu declares the *secular* occupations (*Vrittis*) of the four Varnas in his Code. Each Varna is expected to confine itself to its own prescribed calling, but the three higher Varnas are allowed a certain latitude in times of difficulty for simply finding the means of livelihood,—a latitude which when freely utilised, unfailingly results in a deterioration of the spiritual temper and constitution of those who violate the letter of the Shastraic injunctions. Such deterioration, however, does not involve either the obliteration of the inner and fundamental preponderant Guna,—the original substance peculiar to the constitution of each Varna at its creation, nor the permanent loss to any person of the Brahmin caste of his "right to the performance of the Dharma and Yajna" prescribed for his Varna by the Shastras. The Mahabharata (*Santi-parva*, Chap. 188, sloka 14) says :—

इत्येतैः कर्मभिर्व्यस्ता द्विजा वर्णान्तरं गताः ।
धर्मो यज्ञक्रिया तेषां नित्यं न प्रतिषिध्यते ।

"Those Brahmanas who take up these different occupations and thereby acquire the attributes of other castes are never denied the right to (the performance of) their own (shastraically enjoined) Dharma and Yagna."

While thus there may be a contradiction between a person's Varna or Guna and the Vritti (calling or means of livelihood) prescribed for it, there

can be no such contradiction between the Varna and the Guna or Karma (svadharma),—the natural tendencies (with the activity appropriate to them) which a person brings with him into the world when he takes his birth in a particular Varna. The Gita, which is avowedly an Upanishad, does not at all mention the distribution of professional callings among Varnas, as they have a purely economic, industrial and social significance, but only teaches those Dharmas appertaining to the various Varnas whose strict observance is needed for helping the jiva to realise the Atman which is beyond all the bounds of samsaric experience. The blessed Bhagavan gives this spiritual distribution of Dharma (or svadharma) in Gita XVIII 42—44 already quoted above. These inner and spiritual Dharmas (or characteristic functions) will always remain with every jiva as he passes from birth to birth and will unfailingly rise to the surface at the critical moment when the Guru appears and when the proper Varna body (sthula) is available,—and then they will be utilised by the Guru for the fulfilment of his divine function as the helper who is to promote the permanent interests of the jiva and lead him on to the final goal of deliverance.

We now turn to the *first* question—Why are these four divisions of Varna found in India only, and not elsewhere. The obvious reply is,—that in India alone the function of heredity in transmitting mental tendencies and physical endowments has been always fully guarded,—here alone men and communities have never ventured to disturb the division of Varnas which—as the blessed Bhagavan has said in the Gita—He himself introduced at the time of creation, and which exists still also among Devas, pitris, cows, beasts, birds, snakes, trees, &c. In other countries, owing to the failure of men in general and of the leaders of the community and the state to perceive the value of heredity or of the divine ordering of *Varna-Vibhaga* at the time of creation, the original distinctions have been effaced ; and long ago that *Varna-Sankara* or mixture of castes,—which has ever been dreaded and guarded against in India as a sinful disobedience of the Lord's injunctions—was accomplished.

Let us now discuss heredity in full from the scientific standpoint in order to throw full light on the topic. Heredity, in the form in which Darwin and his school held it, is now overthrown,—viz., the inheritance of acquired characters. Dr. Weismann's researches have tended to show that, in the majority of cases, they have not been inherited. *First,* we must take into account the extreme infrequency of the cases where positive results can be obtained and exhibited as due to inheritance. *Secondly*, the presence of interfering causes has been found. *Thirdly*, the phenomena observed have been found to be the result of mere coincidence, and so the alleged similarity between parent and offspring is a mere accidental coincidence.

Dr. Weismann, while offering these criticisms, did not dispute the importance of heredity, and brought forward his own *theory of germ-plasm.* According to this theory, the most potent factor in heredity is *the constitution of the germ.* The hereditary substance of a cell is composed of "*ids*," equivalent portions of germ-plasm, each of which contains all the kinds of determinants appertaining to the building

of the individual's physical body. How the selection of the "*ids*" belonging to the parents, grandparents, or more remote ancestors is determined in hereditary transmission,—what are the causes determining their mutual influence for adaptation in response to stimuli,—what are the circumstances determining the variations in the nourishment supplied to the several "*ids*" and the equilibrium of the system of "*ids*," in each organism,—these are all questions which are not accounted for in Weismann's theory. But in the main his theory of germ-plasm is now generally admitted and may be said to hold the field.

With regard to Weismann's theory, the part played by personal selection in the grouping together of "*ids*" transmitted from parents or ancestors is one of great importance,—though liable to be ignored in the conflict of human emotions and interests. Personal selection works chiefly in a negative manner, by removing all undesirable or unfavourable individuals from the geneological tree of each species. In India a systematic attempt has been made to preserve and transmit the *guna* of the "*ids*" from father to son, and from ancestor to descendant, even though, in the struggle for life, the predominant interest or passion of the hour may bring about a casual rise or fall in the professional calling and status of the individual. Karma or calling is after all that which determines the relation of the organism to the environment. It is the organism that has to be kept strong and without deterioration; and it is in the organism that the character of the individual is kept in consonance with the group to which he belongs so that the influence of the individual on the group and of the group on the individual will grow ever in strength so that the adjustments of both to the environment will be easy and uninterrupted. Moreover, spiritual growth is always largely independent of the environment and is mainly dependent on the organism and the exercise of the svadharma appropriate to it. It is this that has been kept in mind in the evolution of the social organism in India, for our social aim has been self-conquest and soul-emancipation for the Jiva. On the other hand, the conquest of the environment has been the social aim in the West; and so Western people have been more anxious to vary the "*ids*" entering into the constitution of the germ-plasm and thereby to enable the organism to adapt itself more and more to the environment, but at greater sacrifice or suppression of the inner and spiritual development of the soul arising from the *gunas* and corresponding Karmas. In India alone the Lord's original division of Varnas and his injunctions regarding spiritual evolution by Karmas have been hitherto best maintained.

The True War Aim To-day.

In our view no one of the Allies fighting against the Central Powers is called upon *to-day* to state what they, separately or in combination, wish to see accomplished *at the end of the war*. Each one of them has first to see the war ended, and the only way to end the war is to drive Germany from the places she has occupied or conquered in Europe, to invade Germany and occupy Berlin, to force her army to surrender, and destroy her fleet. Until all this work is completed, it will be

premature to talk of peace. This certainly is no time for statesmen to talk of the re-grouping of peoples or the re-establishment of the balance of power,—no time for Utopians to propound day-dreams like the limitation of armaments, the removal of economic barriers after the war, the setting up of a peace-partnership of civilised people, or the absolute freedom of the seas and of the air, &c. The more statesmen and diplomatists talk of these matters, the more they help to cause distraction in the minds of men. The British Premier, speaking at Paris, condemned the substitution of speech for strategy. But when he begins to speak of "Allied War Aims," as he has done recently, we fear he is himself helping to substitute speech for strategy. The only Allied War Aim now on hand is to win the war, and there is no need to speak of any other. The American President, too, seems to be indulging in mere meaningless Jargon when he says :—"We are not jealous of German greatness, and there is nothing in this (Allied) programme to impair it." The mission of the Allies is to destroy German greatness now,—not to maintain it unimpaired. Otherwise, why are they at war with the Central Powers? If Russia is going to conclude a separate peace with Germany,—the Allies must warn her at once about the folly of her seperating herself from her former companions, but there is no need now to engage in any further negotiations with a land distracted by Civil War, unable to have a will of her own, and forced to bend her neck to the German yoke. So long as the German horde of barbarians remains on the soil of France, Belgium, Italy, Serbia, or Roumania, the Allies can have but one serious aim only,—viz., to drive them out, and then to invade Germany and destroy her army and navy. That will be the first and most effective reply to all the atrocities she has perpetrated and the devastations she has caused. Let us have more generals, more munitions, more troops in the field ; let the army and navy fight and win more battles. We think that the British Premier and the American President need not tell us at this stage what they are going to demand when the war is ended. When the time for discussing peace terms comes on, the entire civilised world and all the peoples in it will surely make known their demands or claims, and the Congress of the world's diplomatists and ambassadors will have to settle each question as it arises. To-day, the assembly of such a Congress is a mere empty dream or pious aspiration, and there is no need to discuss its constitution or anticipate its decisions.

The assurance given by Mr. Lloyd-George that England's war is not one of conquest, and the assurance given by Dr. Wilson that he wants to keep the greatness of Germany unimpaired, appear equally meaningless to us.—for both feel assured that Alsace-Lorraine must be restored to France, that the Italian portion of the Austrian Empire must be taken away and added to Italy, that the slavonic parts of Austria-Hungary must gain freedom, and so on. The German colonies, too, must be freed from German tyranny and handed over to their own people. In a word, Germany must be reduced to the position of a European power, and must cease to be the World-Power she became within the last half-a-century. She must no longer be left in a position to inflict

on the world the wrongs and horrors consequent on her rapacious military ambition. We, therefore, think that when Dr. Wilson stated that "we do not wish to fight her (Germany) with either arms or hostile arrangements of trade, if she is willing to associate herself with us and other peaceful nations of the world in covenants of justice, law and fair-dealing," that statement was only in effect to encourage the present German rulers or authorities in the thought that they can go on fighting and laying waste to their heart's content, and seek peace at leisure. It has ever been, in our view, easy enough for rulers and statesmen to take the "high-falutin" tone when speaking of wars as being fought for the advancement of human liberty. But the truth of history is that nations and communities are quite as subject to the universal law of combat and conquest as they are to the universal law of peaceful alliance and co-operation. The alternating influence of these laws in human affairs is the lesson of all history; and so long as man remains what he has been since creation, there is not the least hope or chance that either individuals or nations well ever steadily recognise the principles of justice or freedom in their dealings with one another. When Dr. Wilson speaks of the present world-struggle as the "culminating war for human liberty" and "for the right of all peoples and nations to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another," we think he is not altogether free from the disingenuous trifling which is common enough in the calculated and stilted phraseology of political commonplace which men in power know how to coin and circulate when they want to conceal the real aims of their policy. We feel in our heart of hearts that all the responsible statesmen of the Allied countries are resolved, first and foremost, to overthrow the German military power. It is this that they should make known to the Central Powers in the frankest manner possible so that, the longer they continue this war, the more certain they may be that all the resources of the Allied nations will be utilised to destroy their army and navy and to impose on them such terms as they deserve for all the horrors and barbarities they have perpetrated on an agonised and suffering world.

We in India are the most poverty-stricken and the feeblest of all communities of civilised men. None can suffer more by the effects of this war, and yet we feel that the only way to get out of our troubles is for our rulers to destroy the German army and navy as early as possible. Then only will be the time for the Allied nations to allow or indulge any discussion of war aims or peace terms. India also has a right to demand this, for it is only the Indian army and its general that have so far truimphantly carried out the military objects entrusted to them in the Asiatic front; and we think the time is coming when their continued advances and triumphs will soon bring such pressure to bear on the position of the Central Powers in the Eastern Front as is needed to bring matters to a crisis in the Western and Italian fronts and to overthrow the German forces by land and sea.

Notes and Comments.

At the last Student's Convention at Trichinopoly, the President, Mr. G. S. Arundale, is stated to have remarked as follows :—"The public virtues and the qualities of the debates and the speeches made by the students compared favourably with those of their elders of the National Congress. He happened to be a member of the subjects Committee of the Congress at Calcutta ; and he would say the members of this Convention and of their subjects Committee showed far more restraint, tolerance and forbearance and respect for differences of opinion than was the case at Calcutta. The speaker was confident that, if the elders should retire and resign the affairs of their country to-day into the hands of young men, they would conduct them with at least no less ability and decorum than they," If this is a correct report of what Mr. Arundale said, we think the man who had the shame-faced audacity to utter the sentiments contained in them should not be allowed to take any further part in any meeting or movement which "the elders" of our country and society are now promoting and they should not join in any movement which he takes up or leads. For, he has shown, by uttering these tactless and foolish sentiments, that he holds all our best men, all our men of light and leading, in supreme contempt. And we are also quite certain from what we know of our "elders" and leaders that the opinions he has given expression to are far, very far, from being correct. Our elders and leaders are, we regret to say, entirely responsible for allowing men like this to inflict such reckless mal-treatment on them and drag their honoured names in the mire. They have allowed these small men to enter their councils, simply because they have allowed themselves to be persuaded, by some one or other and for some reason or other, that these men are going to work wonders for them, either on account of their marvellous self-sacrifice or by reason of their colour, or for some reason yet unknown and undiscovered to us. The result is that Mr. Arundale has now revealed boldly to the world in what contempt he holds our great "elders" and leaders who have so long worked on behalf of the Congress, and who study public affairs and help forward public causes of all kinds. How can a man like this be a safe guide for our students and young men ? What respect can they feel for those "elders" from whom we expect them to receive instruction and guidance ! And, again, do not these young men come from the same classes of the people, and are they not educated in the same way, as the present "elders" and leaders of the land ? If the present "elders" and leaders have proved failures, what guarantee is there that the students and young men of to-day, when they become public men to-morrow, will prove men of better judgment and wisdom than their predecessors ? Mr. Arundale and others like him have, in our view, shown that they are wanting in the common sense. discretion and judgment needed to advise or lead our students and young men. It is because people like him pass for so many Socrateses, Christs, Kants and Vyasas in these days that we are drifting we know not where and that there is so much strife and hatred in the land where hitherto love and harmony prevailed among all. These men may have been actuated in coming to India, by the best of all good intentions and by love of disinterested and philanthropic service. But they show no capacity to guage and comprehend the characters of men or the conditions of society here. The mere fact that they can fearlessly express opinions like those above quoted show that, whether they know it or not, they are continually doing harm to our society by their want of judgment and their reckless disregard for the feelings of those around them, or incapacity to observe and record what they see around them. When will our "elders" and leaders learn to get on without seeking or accepting the help of these men in any branch of national life, and especially to keep our students and young men from getting into the clutch of their hands or hearts.

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We ought now to be able to see that the Government's anxiety that our students should be carefully guarded from being influenced by men of the wrong sort was

not altogether misplaced. The Hon'ble Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer says that "it was a pernicious interference on the part of a foreign government to lay their axe at the root of patriotism." We cannot at all agree to this kind of senseless denunciation. The Hon'ble gentleman may be right when he says that "the Government did not like that the student population should imbibe Home Rule propaganda." But we must not fail to distinguish right from wrong in Home Rule propaganda. It is certainly a mischievous kind of Home Rule propaganda which strives to inoculate our young men with the absurd notion that they would manage "the affairs of the country" better than those who, as their "elders," were engaged in looking after them. Nor is it at all right to maintain, as the Hon'ble Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer does, that the Government is "anxious to debar students from imbibing patriotism,"—a Government, too, which includes an eminent Indian like the Dewan Bahadur P. Rajagopala Chariar. The great literature whose study the Government has been promoting teaches the loftiest lessons of patriotism,—lessons far higher than any which they are likely to learn from men like Mr. Arundale or Mr. Narasimha Iyer. All the men who have risen to eminence as Congress leaders owe their sentiment of patriotism and their efforts in their country's cause not a little to the Colleges and Professors maintained by the Government and to the inspiration gained from their teachings. Further, even if Government erred at first in carrying too far their desire to exclude students from unhealthy influences, they have retraced their steps and now vested in heads of Colleges the discretion to deal with the students' desire to attend meetings, and this decision must be found acceptable to all right-minded men. It is not right to hold that "Government orders as to educational matters were really out of place." The Hon'ble Mr. B. V. Narasimha Iyer is perhaps not aware that Government has often rectified matters where the University has gone wrong,—that even the organs of public opinion and the leaders of the people have often appealed to Government and got the right thing done where the University or other educational authority has gone wrong. It is certainly unreasonable to hold that everything that is done and said by the Government is wrong, and that everything done and said by others—whether true leaders, or misleaders, as sometimes our public men turn out to be—is right and justifiable.

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We think that Students' Conventions should be made the occasion for holding sports, promoting rhetorical and recitation competitions, visiting historical scenes and holy spots, making the acquaintance of famous local magnates, witnessing interesting dramas, inspecting local industries, &c.,—in short, they must be utilised to free students' minds for the time from the burden of reading books and thinking about examinations—to spend a day or two or three every year in enjoying rest and recreation and rural life and scenes. They may also be enabled to listen to a few lectures by specialists on science and art, nature and life. It is altogether a mistake to bring them together to speak on social, political, and educational topics or to pass resolutions for the guidance of "elders," or of public men and public authorities. They have not, in the *first* place, the experience of the world needed to form mature opinions which will carry weight with men who are engaged in handling the problems of life. *Secondly*, they have not the means or resources to bring the pressure of their opinions to bear on elderly men and men in power and to compel them to introduce reforms suggested by them for fear of incurring their displeasure. *Thirdly*, young men should not prematurely concern themselves with the hard realities and struggles of life. Thereby they are apt too early to lose the sense of the joy of life natural to youthhood,—to think too much of their rights and privileges and too little of their duties and responsibilities in regard to self-culture and self-control. Besides, many will begin to compare themselves too favourably with their "elders," simply because they possess the gift of the gab or one of the lighter graces and endowments of human nature. This will only

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breed irreverence and egotism and hasten their course downward into the snares and pitfalls of life. It will also make them unfit for that slow, but sure, nurture of those higher graces and endowments which depend on the taking of infinite pains and lead to what is known as the building up of character, the most valuable of all man's possessions in life.

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We do not also see why our students and young men who attend at conventions and conferences should be trained to eat what are cosmopolitan dinners. The so-called educated Brahmins of to-day have never been known to show much control of the palate and the stomach. They are apt to eat too much and too often, and to die too early. Educated men in general want "light refreshments" too frequently. The plea that social harmony is promoted by eating dinners at which men mix indiscriminately without heeding differences of caste or creed is manifestly false and absurd. For, it is since their institution that the present thoughtless Non-Brahmin agitation has been started, and caste feuds and jealousies have been fomented where none existed before. That familiarity breeds contempt, and contempt breeds hatred, are commonplaces too well known to need insisting upon. On the other hand, the enchantment and mystery of distance is always apt to prove an influence making for attraction and alliance.

Pencillings by the Way—X.

BY S. P. THIAGARAJAN.

It was remarked, in an earlier note of this series, that the Kshatrya under the ancient Hindu polity performed his royal functions with even-handed impartiality. The nature of these functions has however been rarely understood; it has never been seriously inquired whether these functions were democratic or if they led to unrestricted and unmitigated despotism. To my memory, inquiries of such a fruitful nature have rarely been pursued with strict regard to logical or historical accuracy. And yet tall statements are made in the press, and not infrequently on the platform, that the Kshattryas made for despotism or that they were weak. The most astonishing feature is that these two charges are sometimes made in the same breath and by the very same individuals. Those who, like ourselves, contend that the ancient Hindu polity was and is the only possible and genuine democracy are obliged to look into the question a little closer. We wish first to emphasise this: the Kshattrya under our polity represented the executive power of the nation and, in consonance with this view, was always at the head of the armed forces of the State. That such a dazzling eminence where one has sovereign sway over all the armed forces of the State is likely to infatuate a modern with the love of power and to lead him march swiftly on the road to Cæsarism, we all can appreciate. But to their lasting credit be it said, the Kshattrya in our days of splendour never dreamed of the despotism of the Cæsars. That has been left to the modern world. The safeguards that prevented the Kshattrya from developing into a self-willed autocrat, I shall have to refer to on another occasion. I must be content here with the statement that the Kshattrya never abused the trust reposed in him by the commonwealth. If there be men amongst us who look upon the servile pliancy of the executive as its best recommendation, they are likely to look with horror at the almost absolute power of the Kshattrya amongst us. Personally I think it an erroneous notion to look upon the servility of the Executive as a safeguard of popular rights. On the other hand, I do maintain that the strength of the Kshattrya amongst us—I refer to our classical epoch—tended very powerfully to maintain the essentially democratic character of our polity. For, I am of those who think that the main evil of the present democratic institutions in the West lies not so much in their weaknesses, as is commonly supposed, but in their overpowering strength. As will be shown on a subsequent occasion, I am not so much alarmed at the excessive liberty which is (erroneously) supposed to reign there. as at the very feeble and inadequate securities

that exist against tyranny in the West. We have always thought that the strong arm of the Kshattrya prevented our ancient Hindu democracy from falling a prey to that particular tyranny to which democracies are most liable.

And when critics charge our Kshattryas with being despotic, they are labouring under a mental hallucination. I have observed that the Kshattryas represented amongst us the executive power. That is to say, they constituted the central government; but the administration was not in their hands. And I have before shown that legislation was the exclusive prerogative of a unique aristocracy amongst us. If one ponders over these statments and all their implications, one will readily recognise that the ancient Hindu polity made for a genuine democracy—as we have all along been contending. It is only when both administrative and governmental centralisation is vested in the same hands, that there is opened an easy road to despotism. It is because our critics have been content to use the word "centralisation," in a very vague sense and have not had the patience to investigate into our Kshattrya and other Dharmas, that they are unable to comprehend the democratic nature of our ancient polity. Centralisation is become a word of almost daily use, without any precise meaning being fixed or attached to it. Nevertheless there exist two distinct kinds of centralisation, which it is necessary to discriminate with accuracy. We may say that when the power which directs the general interests of a nation is concentrated in one place or is vested in the same persons, we have a central government. In just the same manner, that constitutes what may be termed a central administration where the power of directing partial or local interests is brought together into one place. Upon some points these two kinds of centralisation coalesce : but it will be easy to distinguish them. They mutually assist and attract each other ; but, as a learned writer on democracy says, they must not be supposed to be inseparable. It is their separation, indeed, that marks out a democratic from an autocratic government. It will be evident to the meanest intelligence that a central government acquires immense power when united to administrative centralisation. This union of power not only subdues men compulsorily, but it affects them in the ordinary concerns of life and influences each individual, first seperately and then collectively, to set their own will habitually and completely aside. The spirit of independent initiative is dead for ever in that nation. I am not opposed—nor any genuine democrat—to the centralisation of Government. Indeed, it passes our comprehension how a nation can enjoy a free prosperous existence which lacks in the one essential of a powerful centralised government. We are only opposed to administrative centralisation since it enervates by diminishing the public spirit of the nations in whom it exists. The one classic example of this is modern and British India, the thought involuntarily strike us. As a brilliant student of democracy remarks, if such an administration succeeds in condensing, at a given moment and on a given point, all the available resources of a people, it impairs at least the renewal of those resources. It may ensure a victory in the hour of strife, but it gradually relaxes the sinews of strength. It may contribute admirably to the transient greatness of a man, but it cannot ensure the durable prosperity of a nation.

Let us place ourselves at this view-point and look again at the ancient Hindu polity. I hold it to be an impious and execrable maxim that, politically speaking, a people has the right to do whatsoever it pleases; and yet I do hold, with De Tocqueville, that all authority originates in the will of the majority. But authority cannot arrogate to itself the supremacy of Dharma, which has been evolved by our sages in their superconscious states of *Samadhi*. After all, as a stout American democrat says, the practical reason why, when the power is once in the hands of the people, a majority are permitted, and for a long time continue, to rule, is not because they are most likely to be in the right, nor because this seems fairest to the minority, but because they are physically the strongest. But, we all

know, a government in which the majority rule cannot in all cases be based on justice, even as far as men understand it. In his essay on Civil Disobedience, Henry Thoreau asks: "Can there not be a government in which majorities do not virtually decide right and wrong, but conscience?— in which majorities decide only those questions to which the rule of expediency is applicable?" Certainly there could be and there was such a government,—amongst us in our classical days. The matchless Dharma that is our proud heritage, which we are all of us enjoined to implicity follow is simply the product of universal Conscience revealing itself to our sages and seers in their states of *Samadhi*. Hence we contend that no merely human majority can pronounce a decision upon its being right or wrong. Thus the legislative authority amongst us was placed for ever beyond every sudden breeze of passion or every transient impulse that may be generated among our people by noisy demagogues, as in the West. Nor had these legislators any axe of their own to grind. The fact that in every case the administration of these laws devolved upon the various caste guilds or corporations was a sure guarantee against the tyranny of castes, of which so much capital is made in these latter days. We can place the matter in a nutshell by laying it down broadly that the ancient polity was a democracy on a federal basis, of the equality and interdependence of the castes. It was inevitable in such democracies that some one social power must be made to predominate over the others. And to their eternal credit be it said, the Hindu Rishis placed that predominant power not in a military autocracy nor in a plutocracy, but in the only body of men who, themselves being above temporalities, can take a detached and unconcerned view of temporal affairs.

It will thus be seen that Dharma is the fruit of the national conscience. The administration of the same was in the hands of the castes themselves. It has been truly said in these days that a corporation has no conscience. But a corporation of conscientious men is a corporation with a conscience; and the peculiar genius of the Hindu culture with its excessive ethical emphasis made of us men first and subjects afterwards. It imbued us with a respect not so much for the law, as for the right. The majority certainly decided qnestions of expediency; of such nature are the *âpad-Dharmas*, the prohibition of certain *acharas* during the *Kaliyuga*: and certain other questions which are left to be decided by *Sishtas*. The seers therefore had the right to lay down our Dharma; the castes administered them. And they were enforced—whenever necessary—by the executive power of the nation vested in the Kshattrya. I will hazard the statement on broad grounds,—If this does not constitute genuine democracy, we shall have to search in vain for the same throughout the ages.

The present note has been drawn out to a tedious length; but I cannot conclude it without quoting the observations of Alexander Hamilton, one of the principal founders of the American Constitution, in reply to those men, I referred to, who would regard the servile pliancy of the Executive to a prevailing current, either in the community or in the legislature, as its best recommendation. "Such men", Hamilton says, "entertain very crude notions, as well of the purposes for which Government was instituted as of the true means by which public happiness may be promoted". He goes on: "The Republican principle demands that the deliberative sense of the community should govern the conduct of those to whom they entrust the management of their affairs; but it does not require an unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of passion or to every transient impulse which the people may receive from the acts of men who flatter their prejudices to betray their interests. It is a just observation that the people commonly *intend the public good*. This often applies to their very errors. But their good sense would despise the adulator who should pretend that they always *reason right* about the *means* of promoting it. They know from experience that they sometimes err; and the wonder is that they so seldom err as they do, beset, as they

continually are, by the wiles of parasites and sycophants; by the snares of the ambitious, the avaricious, the desperate; by the artifices of men who possess their confidence more than they deserve it; and of those who seek to possess rather than deserve it. When occasions present themselves in which the interests of the people are at variance with their inclinations, it is the duty of persons whom they have appointed to be the guardian of those interests to withstand the temporary delusion, in order to give them time and opportunity for more cool and sedate reflection. Instances might be cited in which a conduct of this kind has saved the people from very fatal consequences of their own mistakes, and has procured lasting monuments of their gratitude to the men who had courage and magnanimity enough to serve them at the peril of their displeasure".

The Bhagavad Gita

With an English Exposition

By K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI B. A. B. L.

(The substance of the lectures now being delivered at the Students' Sanatana Dharma Sabha, Trichinopoly.)

ADHYAYA I.

(continued.)

In Sri Yamunacharya's *Gitârtha Sangraha* the purport of this chapter is stated thus.

अस्थानस्नेहकारुण्यधर्माधर्मधियाकुलम् ।
पार्थं प्रपन्नमुद्दिश्य शास्त्रावतरणं कृतम् ॥

(The exposition of the scripture was made to save Arjuna who was agitated by misplaced affection and pity and by deeming his duty as a breach of duty and who sought refuge with Sri Krishna and prayed for enlightenment in a spirit of utter self-surrender.)

I may point out here that according to Madhusudana Sarasvathi and other Advaitic commentators the Gita is an exposition of the basic truth contained in the Mahâvâkya *Tatvamasi* (That art thou.) He says that the first six Chapters प्रथमषट्क of the Gita deal with the त्वं पदार्थ and the Yôgas, that the second six chapters द्वितीयषट्क of the Gita deal with the तत्पदार्थ (God) and that the third six Chapters तृतीयषट्क of the Gita deals with the oneness of the soul and the oversoul. He says further that the प्रथमषट्क deals with Karma mârga, the द्वितीयषट्क with the Upasana mârga and the तृतीयषट्क with the Gnana mârga. He says:

तत्र तु प्रथमे कांडे कर्म तत्त्यागवर्त्मना ।
त्वंपदार्थो विशुद्धात्मा सोपपत्तिर्निरूप्यते ॥

द्वितीये भगवद्भक्तिनिष्ठावर्णनवर्त्मना ।
भगवान्परमानन्दस्तत्पदार्थोऽवधार्यते ॥

तृतीये तु तयोरैक्यं वाक्यार्थो वर्ण्यते स्फुटम् ।
एवमप्यत्र कांडानां संबन्धोऽस्ति परस्परम् ॥

He says further that by giving up *Kâmya Karma* and *Nishiddha Karma* and by doing *Nishkâma Karma*, we become pure क्षीणपापाः and attain चित्तशुद्धि and साधनचतुष्टयसंपत्ति (the attainment of the fourfold *sadhanas*). These *sadhanas* are नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः (the discrimination of the eternal and the non-eternal) इहामुत्रफलभोगविरागः (desirelessness in regard to the enjoyment of fruit here and beyond) शमदमादिसंपत्तिः । (the attainment of dispassion, self-control etc.) and मुमुक्षुत्वं (an over-mastering desire for liberation and self-realisation). He says that after such attainment the soul attains the full fruitfulness of श्रवण (hearing मनन meditation), and निदिध्यासन (ceaseless and intensive contemplation). Then it attains realisation (साक्षात्कार) through the *Mahâvâkya sravana*. It is only then that Avidya is overcome; it is only then that *Bhrama* (wrong cognition) and *Samsaya* (doubt) vanish; it is only then that संचित and आगामि Karmas are destroyed, only the Prârabdha Karmas holding sway like an arrow already let loose from the bow and hence bound to expend itself; it is only then that we have वासनाक्षय and मनोनाश consequent on तत्वज्ञान; यमनियमासनप्राणायाम, and प्रत्याहार are बहिरङ्गानि (outer means) leading to धारणा, ध्यान and समाधि; and when निर्विकल्प समाधि is attained there is the attainment of जीवन्मुक्तिः ।

In the above exposition the leading doctrines of the Advaitic school are briefly set out and I shall expound them fully later on. The main doctrines of the Visishtadvaita school are given to us in relation to the chapters of the Gita in these verses by Sri Yâmunacharya.

स्वधर्मज्ञानवैराग्यसाध्यभक्त्येकगोचरः ।
नारायणः परं ब्रह्म गीताशास्त्रे समीरितः ॥

ज्ञानकर्मात्मिके निष्ठे योगलक्षे सुसंस्कृते ।
आत्मानुभूतिसिद्ध्यर्थे पूर्वषट्केन चोदिते ॥

मध्यमे भगवत्तत्वयाथात्म्यावाप्तिसिद्धये ।
ज्ञानकर्माभिनिर्वर्त्यो भक्तियोगः प्रकीर्तितः ॥

प्रधानपुरुषव्यक्तसर्वेश्वरविवेचनम् ।
कर्मधीर्भक्तिरित्यादिः पूर्वशेषोऽन्तिमोदितः ॥

He says that in the first Chapters we have the Karma Yoga and the Gnana Yoga leading to the realisation of the true nature of the individual soul (which according to the Visishtadvaitas is अणु and not विभु or identical with God as with the Advaitins), that in the second six Chapters we have Bhakti Yoga leading to realisation of the true nature of Godhead, and that in the third six Chapters we have the differentiation of Purusha and Prakriti, Karma, Bhakti, and other miscellaneous topics.

As a matter of fact, though such broad divisions of the subject-matter of the Gita are in the main correct and enable us to have a clear view of the procession of ideas in the Gita according to these two schools of thought, we will find that the Gita lays stress throughout on God-love and God-realisation as being the *sole* means of liberation and describes in detail the path of Nishkama Karma again and again throughout the eighteen chapters as the sole means of attaining God-love and God-realisation. To avoid concentrating our attention on the few points of doctrinal differences among the various schools of thought and to enable us to have a general idea of the march of thought in the Gita, I would say that the first six Chapters deal primarily with the Karma Yoga including Raja Yoga as means for the attainment of purity and concentration of mind, that the second six chapters deal with the nature and manifestations and glories of Godhead and the Bhakti Yoga, and that the last six chapters deal with the Gnana Yoga and a large number of topics connected with Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yôga.

(*To be continued.*)

Correspondence.

The views of our contributors and correspondents do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Review—Ed.

"'To be or not to be' is the question"

It has fallen to the lot of the 20th century A. D. Brahmin to solve in all seriousness,—the Brahmin who has been the pioneer, the developer and the maintainer of the ancient Hindu Aryan Civilisation all through these numberless ages since the dawn of the world's creation, though with varying degrees of success and subject to innumerable vicissitudes, good, bad and indifferent; the Brahmin who has always been the divinely selected custodian and preacher and practiser of the ancient Arya Dharma; the Brahmin whose only blemish and ill-luck has lain in his having been true to the sanctified ordinances of the saintly *Rishis of yore as far as practicable.* This Brahmin it is, who has now to face desperately the problem of his very existence in his own sacred and eternal land. Where is his place now in the South India? What is his status in the Madras Presidency just now? The South Indian People's Association has boycotted him; the Madras Presidency Association has no room for him? Where is he to live? Perhaps to dive deep into the waters of the Bay of Bengal and keep on with half-breath or no-breath until he is rescued by Kalki, the Avatar to come of this age, provided he survives till then! This is the pass the Brahmin, the miserable but maligned, the respectable but reviled, the virtuous but vilified and the patient but phoo-phooed being, has come to in the year of Lord Jesus 1918! Does this state of affairs argue any sense of respect and reverence, of character and culture, indeed of all those good traits which go to make up what is called generous liberal-mindedness in those who are the deliberate authors of the situation? And yet the world's ears are deafened by constant

eulogistic characterisation of the Modern English Education as '*liberal*,' as opposed to old illiberal, crude and inhuman methods. To spite and vilify the members of their own society who till a little while ago, were objects of reverence and regard in the whole Hindu Social fabric, to sow seeds of discord and hate and grow them vigilantly and vigorously into gigantic disruptive and disintegrating, demoralising and denationalising trees, is this '*liberal*'? The stock-in-trade of this class of separatists is the argument that the Brahmin has given up his priestly calling and has a misappropriated monopoly of all the state loaves and fishes, of all learned and lucrative professions, to the greatest detriment of the other Hindu communities! If only these irresponsible and reckless talkers think in a moment of calm, they will readily find they have no cause for complaint against the Brahmin. To begin with, if the Brahmin is seen in abundance in every walk of life, it is not owing to any special concession sought by or shown to, him, by Government or any other agency. The Brahmin succeeds in spite of himself, I may say, even. Certainly in the posts under Government, the Brahmin, as a rule, is appointed only when others equally competent are not available. He is fixed upon only in the last resort. This is no secret. The whole history of the official patronage at least for a decade or so, will bear out the above statement. A perusal of the advertisements for appointments will clearly show how the Non-brahmins have always been offered preferential treatment. A foreign Government has wisely allowed equal chances to all its subjects irrespective of considerations of caste and creed. It is open to all to hug them whenever possible or wherever necessary. The Brahmin has compulsorily by reason of his peculiar position in the Hindu Society, been forced, as a matter of necessity for self-preservation, to seek for posts and professions, not far inconsistent with his hereditary tastes. The Brahmin's 'study and meditation' if continued as in the past, will only make him a thing of the past in the course of a generation, for such is the tendency of this materialistic age. He studied, and did so many other duties ordained for him in the scriptures, as long as his position was esteemed and appreciated and he was placed beyond want for his worldly existence by the native governments of old. With the disappearance of these and the dawn of irreligious and irreverent materialism, the Brahmin's old duties disappeared as a natural sequence, with the result he has had to strive by all honoroubl and honest means possible, for keeping his body and soul together. If at all any community could likely be in the virge of starvation and ruin, under a foreign domination, it was the Brahmin Community. Luckily the British Goyernment with its broad and noble impulses and instincts declared its neutrality in regard to religio-social institutions, and the poor Brahmin was saved. With no kings of his own to support him, with no place to count in the numerical strength of the country, he would have fallen an easy prey to his foes, but for the sagacity of the British Government. He always depended on his learning which always served him well. His learning in the past was learning in the then state language. Agreeably to the modern conditions, he has necessarily had to adjust himself and has taken to the modern state learning. Learning has always—no matter in what language—its merit and merit attracts attention and appreciation of the Government of the day. Why should our Anti-Brahmin Hindus lash themselves into a fury and hate, seeing that the Brahmin has to be so inevitably in the circumstances. The only attitude possible of a true Non-Brahmin Hindu is to show reverend love and pity for the Brahmin and any other is only ungrateful, unnatural and ignoble.

But in the case of the other Hindu Communities, they have in no way, cause to have gone down if at all they have. Their duties have always been clearly defined and the nature of their work is always such that it can command support and popularity at any time and under any Government. Arts and agriculture, trade and industry are always valued, unlike the ancient learning of the Brahmins now disregarded and deplored. All the other classes have always been in an advantageous position at least in the material aspects of life. It is but natural they should continue to stick to their hereditary callings and, of course, the only best way of utilising the modern civilisation is for them to develop and improve besides maintaining their respective vocations in the light of

modern scientific discoveries and knowledge. They have no manner of business or right to revile the Brahmin who has been alone dislodged from his ancient status. The Non-Brahmin Hindus have chosen to be indifferent to this aspect of their activities and, without any steady programme stultified themselves if at all, by trying indiscriminately for all kinds of jobs in common with the rest. On whom has the material prosperity of a country depended always? How did it flourish here always in the past? Why should there be a hue and cry at present at its decline? The Brahmin has been responsible for the spiritual and religious comforts of the whole society, while the others looked after the other requirements of the whole, each in his own way working for the common weal, on the principle of the 'division of labour.' This principle has now been conveniently set aside and hence all the irritating inconvenience and imprudence. One would have expected that in the present general national awakening the *reality* was found out and the whole problem of general content and prosperity was rightly solved. But, sorry indeed to observe, the awakening has come to be of a mischievous type, tending to usher the Hindu Society into a sleep again which might know no waking! May God forbid such a catastrophy.

The Brahmin is openly hated and hooted, not by others mind you, but by his own brethren in the Hindu fold! Many a sage and sapient foreigner has learnt to revere and respect the India of the ancient Brahmins' making but the members of the Hindu family themselves have come to hate their head for no fault of his except for his being the merited head. Very early in the educational career, young school children generally read a lesson in one of their Readers on "Belly and the other members." The truth of this lesson is lost wholesale on the modern adult and educated generations. To say that 'head' ought not always to be where it is, and, the other organs where they are in the human frame—Is this sensible? Can these organs ever change their places and functions—allotted severally to each for the common welfare of the whole? If the *man* who boasts of being *a thinking and rational animal*, but realises the truth of the principle of human frame, if he but learns useful lessons from God's works and Nature's scheme, the present unnatural warfare among the organs of the Hindu social frame as if tending to political bliss would have long ago become a thing of the past. But the pity is, *none are so blind as those who will not see.* While the Brahmin is hated, he is negatively revered in a way. All the other Hindu classes have created themselves an odium for their respective caste-designations and have chosen to express themselves in the terms of the self-same hated Brahmin, by adding prefixes *Anti* or *Non.* This is also a sort of praise, hateful praise, known in Sanskrit devotional hymns as *Ninda-stuti* (நிந்தாஸ்துதி). That is a reverence which they unconsciously and involuntarily show to the *Brahmin.* Look again at the tremendous odds ranged against the microscopic Brahmin, who is but a fortieth of the population of the Presidency! Indeed it is an extraordinary position! A position of which the Brahmin need not be ashamed at all. Still he has to reckon all the gigantic antagonistic forces rallied against him not by individuals, but by vastly numerous communities whose united breath might hurl him down the Patala or waft him high up in shapeless atoms in etherial regions! In this huge unequal contest, the Brahmin can only look to unstinted help and moral courage, born of firm faith in the Almighty and the holy saints and sages of the sacred India of old, and of devotion to the benign British Government in the words of whose present Prime Minister Mr. Lloyd George, "a Government's foremost and primary *duty is to protect the weak against the strong.*" For who is more weak than the Brahmin community, and who is more strong than the serried phalanx of forces arranged against him? Who is stronger than these strong, but the Government of the day? Let the Brahmin, therefore, be calm and composed, patient and persevering, selfless and sacrificing, as ever before, alive always to the '*Brahmin's burden*' and its risks and responsibilities, whether recognised or not by the outside world; and let him rely safely on the British Government who always know wherever merit is and how to recognise and appreciate it, in silent and unostentatious, but nevertheless effective manner.

J. S. R. SARMA.

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